

JAPAN CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY NEWS

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SUMMER WORK CAMPS AND CARAVANS - Christian youth in action

This summer the NCC Youth Commission will sponsor two High School Work Camps, two Youth Caravans, and three Interantional Work Camps for college students. Rev. Masami Mizuno, Secretary and David Swain, Associate Secretary of the Youth Commission announced that these programs will run for two, three and four weeks respectively.

Ever since 1949 these Work Camps have been held each summer giving a chance for Christian youth to witness in concrete ways to the meaning of service which grows out of a loving concern. In 1950 an International work camp was held at a co-operative farm in Chiba Pref. run by forty families repatriated from Manchuria. This struggling farm was finally getting on its feet this year when a tragic fire wiped out its total supply of stored grain and peanuts, completely ruined the machinery which was the basis of a small home industry, and leveled the barn built by the work campers as well as the central co-operative building. One of the International Work Camps this summer will be to help these brave people as they struggle to their feet once more.

A second International Work Camp will help to repair a village meeting house and ground which have been used by a local congregation to operate a Christian day nursery and to worship in. The relations between the Christian congregation and the local community of Miwamura in Shikoku are unusually good and such a work camp will go far in witnessing to an already receptive community.

The third college student camp will be a combination service project and leadership training program.

While working on a playground and putting the finishing touches on two church buildings which are to be completed this spring, the camp will seek to build up youth programs and train older youth to continue the programs in these two churches. Also, with the help of the Occupational Evangelism department of the United Church of Christ in Japan (Kyodan), the campers will have a chance to meet laborers and labor leaders in the vicinity of the churches in order to study the problems of the people in the area. Through these means they will try to fit their program to the needs of the community.

The two caravans will operate in the northern part of Hokkaido and around Lake Biwa near Kyoto respectively. Stopping in one place for about 3 days, the caravan will hold meetings for youth and children, often going out from the "base church" to nearby places for pioneer evangelistic work. One of the High School Work Camps will build a swimming pool and playground for the widows and children of the Naomi Home in Tokyo.

Funds for this vital summer program are obtained from the campers themselves and the Youth Department of the WCC to some extent, but much of the money must come directly from interested persons and churches in Japan and all over the world.

Readers in Japan, U.S.A. and elsewhere are urged to watch for young people who could both benefit from and contribute to these several activities.

JOHN R. MOTT - the passing of a pioneer ecumenical statesman

In Japan, as in many other countries throughout the world, word of the death of John R. Mott on January 31 was received as important news. Church leaders recognized the passing of a pioneer ecumenical statesman of the first rank. Many Christians, both Japanese and foreign, who had worked with Dr. Mott, or whose lives had been affected by his far-reaching influence, felt a real sense of shock and of personal loss. Secular newspapers carried notice of his death, referring especially to his ten visits to Japan, his work with the Christian youth organizations here, his assistance in the relief of the victims of the great earthquake in 1926, and his audiences with the emperor on various occasions. Dr. Mott had secular status in Japan, not only as a Nobel Peace Prize winner, but also as a holder of the First Order of the Sacred Treasure, a national honor accorded him for service to Japan.

A memorial service attended by over 300 people was held on March 4 at 3:00 p.m. in the Kyodan's Fujimicho Church in Tokyo. An impressive array of Christian leaders, lay and clerical, took part in leading the service, paying tribute to a Christian layman to whom many of them were deeply and personally indebted for their Christian faith and vision.

Among those leading the service were Takeo Igarashi, lay chairman of the national YMCA, Tamaki Uemura, chairman of the YWCA, Merrell Vories, famed lay missionary of the Omi Brotherhood Soichi Saito of the Tokyo YMCA, Takeshi Muto, moderator of the United Church of Japan, and Toyohiko Kagawa, whose name is widely known and honored throughout the Christian world. The principal speaker was the Rev. Michio Kozaki, former moderator of the United Church in Japan. Messages were read either in person or by personal representatives from Prime Minister Hatoyama; the Ambassadors to Japan of the United States and Canada; Dr. Takashi Komatsu, chairman of the Japan-America Society; Rev. Darley Downs, Secretary of the Inter-Board Committee for Christian Work in Japan; and representatives of the YMCA.

In his address Dr. Kozaki cited the worldwide accomplishments of Dr. Mott starting in his work with the Student Volunteer Movement and the World's Student Christian Federation, and climaxing in his leadership in the formation of the International Missionary Council and the World Council of Churches. Dr. Mott's life, he said, was "A witness of the eternal life of God in Christ."

Prime Minister Hatoyama, in a message read by a personal representative expressed the gratitude of the Japanese nation for the work of this outstanding Christian. He said; "I consider it a privilege to express my sincere respect and heartfelt thanks to the late Dr. John R. Mott, who was honorary life president of the World's Alliance of Young Men's Christian Associations and one of the presidium of World Council of Churches. He visited our country no less than ten times and worked steadfastly for the education of Japanese youth. Dr. Mott made a great contribution to the cause of Japanese-American friendship through his guidance of Japanese students in America, his assistance rendered to various facilities of our youngmen's associations and also through his relief works after the Great Earthquake Disaster."

"It is with deep regret, therefore, that I learn that Dr. Mott passed away on the 31st of January 1955 at the advanced age of 89 and I do feel that the world has lost a great leader thereby. I cannot mourn his death too much but am firmly convinced that his life-long achievement will live forever in the heart of the youth of the world.

"May I take this opportunity to express my heartfelt condolences and to pray for the abundant grace and comfort for his bereaved family."

Mr. T.C. Davis, Canadian Ambassador to Japan said in part: "I doubt if any other human being had, in his field, the influence for good which he wielded.....He was as well known from one end of Canada to the other, as any Canadian of my generation. One wonders how one man could in one lifetime do as much and make such an impression upon....this troubled world."

HOME AND FAMILY PROBLEMS - new studies for seminarians

Miss Ai Sasaki, Secretary of the NCC Commission on Home and Family Life has announced plans for a concentrated three day study course on Home and Family Problems at the Tokyo Theological Seminary. The course will be held this spring for seniors in seminary. The purpose will be to relate Christian Ethics and Pastoral Counseling in such areas as family and in-law relations, marriage counseling and boy-girl relations.

Since seminary training in Japan is predominantly in the field of Bible and Theology, practical subjects such as these are sometimes neglected. Therefore the very basic information such as what government social and counseling services are available is often overlooked. This course is the beginning of an effort to strengthen the practical training in these fields. It is an outgrowth of one of the recommendations of the East Asia Christian Family Life Seminar-Conference at Manila last November.

GOODWILL TEAM TO PHILIPPINES - "turn about is fair (inter)play"

In response to the Goodwill team of young people from the Philippine United Church of Christ to the Kyodan last Spring and Summer, four Japanese Christian youth will go to the Philippines this July and August.

The four Philippine young people divided into two teams of a boy and girl each who went to northern and southern Japan with a Japanese guide-interpreter. They visited churches, Christian schools and work camps, evoking in each a warm response.

The four Japanese young people who will return the visit this year are: Miss Mikako Nishio, teacher at Baiko Joshi Gakuin; Miss Kimiko Takeuchi, student of Tokyo Toritsu Daigakko; Mr. Haruo Tsuru, teacher at I.C.U.; and Rev. Noboru Nishido, pastor of the Airin Church. They will take with them slides and pictures of Christians and their work in Japan.

It is hoped that this interchange will draw the Christians of these two countries together in a closer fellowship.

